

A. Overview Information

- I. Federal Agency Name: Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, Information Processing Technology Office
- II. Funding Opportunity Title: **Spoken Language Communication and Translation Systems for Tactical Use (TRANSTAC) Program**
- III. Announcement Type: Initial Broad Agency Announcement (BAA)
- IV. Funding Opportunity Number: **BAA 06-21**
- V. CFDA Number: 12.910
- VI. Key Dates
 - a. Abstracts Due: 12:00 Noon (ET), February 24, 2006
 - b. Proposal Closing: 12:00 Noon (ET), March 24, 2006
 - c. Final Closing: 12:00 Noon (ET), January 30, 2007
 - d. All administrative correspondence and questions on this solicitation, including requests for information on how to submit a proposal to this BAA, must be received at one of the administrative addresses below by 12:00 Noon (ET) January 16, 2007

B. Full text of announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

DARPA seeks proposals for research and development in support of Phase II of the Spoken Language Communication and Translation System for Tactical Use (TRANSTAC) program. The goal of the TRANSTAC program is to demonstrate capabilities to rapidly develop and field translation systems that enable speakers of different languages to communicate with one another in real world tactical situations. Systems will support languages of relevance to national security, must be speaker-independent, and extremely easy to use for mobile end-users. A specific program objective is reduced-time-solution for new languages or dialects or new domains, with a target of building systems for new domains or new languages within 100 days.

The primary use cases involve US military personnel and local foreign language speakers. In order for the system to perform reliably in real-world tactical environments, dramatic improvements need to be made in many areas including: speech recognition, machine translation, noise robustness, user interface design, and efficient performance on limited hardware platforms. Also essential are the system development tools to support new domains and languages quickly and in an efficient matter. Hence, structured yet rich domain specification methodology, novel ways for collecting linguistic data, and new techniques for transferring capabilities developed for one language to others are sought.

DARPA seeks innovative ideas in three major areas:

- 1. Robustness
- 2. Rapid Development
- 3. Evaluations

Offerors may address one or all three of the above areas in their proposal. Further information on the areas of interest, submission, evaluation, funding processes, and proposal formats can be found in the Proposer Information Pamphlet (PIP), which will be posted directly to FedBizOpps.gov and may also be obtained at <http://www.darpa.mil/ipto/Solicitations/solicitations.htm>

II. Award Information

The Government reserves the right to select all, some, or none of the proposals received in response to this solicitation and to make awards without discussions with offerors; however, the Government reserves the right to conduct discussions if the Source Selection Authority later determines them to be necessary. Final funding determination will be based on the combination of proposed approaches, which will reasonably support program success. Proposals identified for funding may result in a contract, grant, cooperative agreement, or other transaction depending upon the nature of the work proposed, the required degree of interaction between the parties, and other factors. If warranted, portions of resulting awards may be segregated into pre-priced options.

III. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants

All responsible sources capable of satisfying the Government's needs may submit a proposal that shall be considered by DARPA. Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Small Disadvantaged Businesses and Minority Institutions (MIs) are encouraged to submit proposals and join others in submitting proposals. However, no portion of this BAA will be set aside for Small Disadvantaged Business, HBCU and MI participation due to the impracticality of reserving discrete or severable areas of this research for exclusive competition among these entities.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost sharing is not required for this particular program; however, cost sharing will be carefully considered where there is an applicable statutory condition relating to the selected funding instrument (e.g., for any Technology Investment Agreement under the authority of 10 U.S.C. 2371).

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. Address to Request Application Package

This announcement and the PIP contain all information required to submit a proposal. No additional forms, kits, or other materials are needed. [Note: see paragraph 7, "other submission requirements," for reference to the PIP.]

2. Content and Form of Application Submission

This BAA requires completion of an online Cover Sheet for each Abstract AND each Proposal prior to submission. To do so, the offeror must go to <https://csc.ballston.dmeid.org/baa/index.asp?BAAid=06-21> and follow the instructions there. Each offeror is responsible for printing the Confirmation Sheet (which will appear after finalizing the Cover Sheet submission) and attaching it to every copy. The Confirmation Sheet should be the first page of the Abstract or Proposal. If an offeror intends to submit more than one Abstract or Proposal, a unique UserId and password must be used in creating each Cover Sheet. **Cover Sheets already submitted for abstracts may not be re-used or edited for proposal submissions.** Failure to comply with these submission procedures may result in the submission not being evaluated. DARPA will acknowledge receipt of submissions and assign control numbers that should be used in all further correspondence regarding submissions.

Abstract Submission

In order to minimize unnecessary effort in proposal preparation and review, offerors are strongly encouraged to submit brief abstracts in advance of a full proposal. An abstract should state clearly the uniqueness of the idea presented in the context of existing state-of-the-art in the technical area of interest. Demonstrating that the offeror has a clear understanding of the state-of-the-art and that their proposed effort will make significant improvements therein is essential for a successful proposal. A description of the team structure and the technical expertise of the principal investigator and other key team members should be provided. Finally, an outline of evaluation procedures, a list of deliverables, and an estimate of the program costs should be included. Abstracts should not be longer than 6 pages.

Offerors must submit the original and 2 copies of the abstract *and* 2 electronic copies of the abstract (in PDF or Microsoft Word 2000 for IBM-compatible format on a 3.5-inch floppy disk or cd). **Mac-formatted disks will not be accepted.** Each disk must be clearly labeled with BAA 06-21, offeror organization, abstract title (short title recommended) and "Copy ___ of 2". The abstract (original and designated number of hard and electronic copies) must be submitted to DARPA/IPTO, ATTN: BAA 06-21, 3701 N. Fairfax Drive, Arlington, VA 22203-1714, in time to reach DARPA by 12:00 NOON (ET) **24 February 2006** to guarantee review.

After review of abstracts, DARPA will make a recommendation to offerors either encouraging or discouraging submission of full proposals. Because the recommendations based on abstracts will be made on an ongoing basis, offerors are encouraged not to wait until the closing date to make their submissions. Regardless of the recommendation, the decision to propose is the responsibility of the offeror. All submitted proposals will be fully reviewed, regardless of the disposition of the abstract. However, proposals will not be reviewed until after the 24 March 2006 deadline.

Proposal Submission

Offerors must submit the original and 2 copies of the full proposal *and* 2 electronic copies of the full proposal (in PDF or Microsoft Word 2000 for IBM-compatible format

on a 3.5-inch floppy disk or cd). **Mac-formatted disks will not be accepted.** Each disk must be clearly labeled with BAA 06-21, offeror organization, proposal title (short title recommended) and "Copy ____ of 2". The full proposal (original and designated number of hard and electronic copies) must be submitted in time to reach DARPA by 12:00 PM (ET) **24 March 2006**, in order to be considered during the initial evaluation phase.

Security classification guidance on a DD Form 254 (DoD Contract Security Classification Specification) will not be provided at this time since DARPA is soliciting ideas only. After reviewing incoming proposals, if a determination is made that contract award may result in access to classified information, a DD Form 254 will be issued upon contract award. **If you choose to submit a classified proposal you must first receive the permission of the Original Classification Authority to use their information in replying to this BAA.**

4. Submission Dates and Times

DARPA will accept abstracts beginning one week after the BAA is posted until February 24, 2006.

Full proposals must be submitted in time to reach DARPA by 12:00 NOON (ET) **24 March 2006** in order to be considered during the initial evaluation phase. However, **BAA 06-21, Spoken Language Communication and Translation Systems for Tactical Use (TRANSTAC)** will remain open until 12:00 NOON (ET) **30 January 2007**. While the proposals submitted after the **24 March 2006** deadline will be evaluated by the Government, offerors should keep in mind that the likelihood of funding such proposals is less than for those proposals submitted in connection with the initial evaluation and award schedule.

5. Intergovernmental Review – N/A

6. Funding Restrictions

Authorization of precontract costs will be considered in situations of genuine urgency where programmatic benefits will accrue from their use.

7. Other Submission Requirements

Offerors must obtain the BAA 06-21 PIP, which provides further information on the areas of interest, submission, evaluation, funding processes, and abstract/proposal formats. This pamphlet will be posted directly to FedBizOpps.gov and may also be obtained at <http://www.darpa.mil/ipto/Solicitations/solicitations.htm>. Proposals not meeting the format described in the pamphlet may not be reviewed. This notice, in conjunction with the BAA 06-21 PIP and all references, constitutes the total BAA. No additional information is available, nor will a formal RFP or other solicitation regarding this announcement be issued. Requests for same will be disregarded.

V. Application Review Information

1. Criteria (listed in descending order of relative importance):

- (1) Overall Scientific and Technical Merit
- (2) Innovative Technical Solution to the Problem
- (3) Offeror's Capabilities and Related Experience
- (4) Plans and Capability to Accomplish Technology Transition
- (5) Cost Realism

2. Review and Selection Process

It is the policy of DARPA to ensure impartial, equitable, comprehensive evaluation of all proposals and to select the source (or sources) whose offer meets the Government's technical and policy goals. Evaluation of proposals will be accomplished through a scientific review of each proposal, using the above criteria, which are detailed further in the PIP.

Proposals will not be evaluated against each other, since they are not submitted in accordance with a common work statement. DARPA's intent is to review proposals as soon as possible after they arrive; however, proposals may be reviewed periodically for administrative reasons.

Restrictive notices notwithstanding, proposals may be handled for administrative purposes by support contractors. These support contractors are prohibited from competition in DARPA technical research and are bound by appropriate non-disclosure requirements. Input on technical aspects of the proposals may be solicited by DARPA from non-Government consultants /experts who are also bound by appropriate non-disclosure requirements. However, non-Government technical consultants/experts will not have access to proposals that are labeled by their offerors as "Government Only". Use of non-government personnel is covered in FAR 37.203(d).

VI. Award Information Administration

1. Award Notices

Principal Investigators will receive a letter informing them of the disposition of their proposal via U.S. mail.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Offerors may visit DARPA's Contracts Management Office (CMO) website (<http://www.darpa.mil/cmo/pages/modelgrantagreement.htm>) for model grant and cooperative agreement terms and conditions.

For Research Involving Human Subjects:

Proposals selected for funding are required to comply with provisions of the Common Rule (32 CFR 219) on the protection of human subjects in research (<http://www.dtic.mil/biosys/downloads/32cfr219.pdf>) and the Department of Defense Directive 3216.2 (<http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/html2/d32162x.htm>). All proposals that involve the use of human subjects are required to include documentation of their ability to follow Federal guidelines for the protection of human subjects. This includes, but is not limited to, protocol approval mechanisms, approved Institutional Review Boards, and Federal Wide Assurances. These requirements are based on expected human use issues sometime during the entire length of the proposed effort.

For proposals involving "greater than minimal risk" to human subjects within the first year of the project, performers must provide evidence of protocol submission to a federally approved IRB *at the time of final proposal submission to DARPA*. For proposals that are forecasted to involve "greater than minimal risk" after the first year, a discussion on how and when the offeror will comply with submission to a federally approved IRB needs to be provided in the submission. More information on applicable federal regulations can be found at the Department of Health and Human Services – Office of Human Research Protections website (<http://www.dhhs.gov/ohrp/>).

3. Reporting

The Award Document for each proposal selected and funded will contain a mandatory requirement for submission of Quarterly Status Reports and an Annual Project Summary Report. These reports will be submitted electronically via the DARPA/IPTO Technical-Financial Information Management System (T-FIMS). Further details may be found in the PIP.

The DARPA/CMO website referenced above also provides general information about reports required specifically for grants and cooperative agreements.

VII. Agency Contacts

Fax: (703) 741-7804 Addressed to: DARPA/IPTO, BAA 06-21

Electronic Mail: BAA06-21@darpa.mil

Electronic File Retrieval: <http://www.darpa.mil/ipto/Solicitations/solicitations.htm>

Mail to: DARPA/IPTO

ATTN: BAA 06-21

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Arlington, VA 22203-1714